

PRESS BRIEFING IN MANAUS, BRAZIL
ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN
CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
MARCH 2, 2009

ADMIRAL MULLEN: Good morning. It is a great privilege to be here with Governor Braga and Minister Jobim. This is my first trip to the Amazon and first trip to Brazil and it is a special, special trip for me. It is an important part of our relationship from the military-to-military perspective and a growing partnership, which is very important to the region and to the globe. I was particularly impressed with the military parade today and the discipline and the professionalism that I saw. I look forward to later today to seeing more of the Amazon, more of the great Brazilian military. It represents, again, a significant partnership and strength, which the United States military is privileged and honored to have. Thank you.

QUESTION: What is Brazil's importance today to Obama's government as Brazil is in a strategic position with countries with which the United States or to which countries that the United States has a different look upon us, for example Venezuela and Bolivia?

ADMIRAL MULLEN: There's no question that Brazil is critical, the relationship is critical to the United States of America and Brazil is at the heart of a region that is vital, not just to South America, but literally to the United States and countries around the world. We are greatly dependent and have a great deal of respect for the leadership of Brazil. Again, from the military perspective, this relationship is absolutely vital.

QUESTION: Is there a more specific reason for you to get to know the Amazonian command and the Amazonian region?

ADMIRAL MULLEN: I was asked to come to Manaus and to see the Amazonian command. Sometimes you learn a great deal more about the military by being in the field as opposed to being in the capital. So I can really see what the command does every single day and how important it is to the country of Brazil as well as to the region.

QUESTION: There is precise information that Iran has enough material for a nuclear bomb. What is the danger this represents to the world?

ADMIRAL MULLEN: Iran continues to develop the potential to have a nuclear weapon and I think that is very destabilizing. Should they continue, that is very destabilizing for the region as well as for the rest of the world.

QUESTION: In light of this, will there be another type of strategy as in the Middle East, the United States has decided to take troops away from Iraq by 2011.

ADMIRAL MULLEN: We have a new president who is very strategically focused and as far as the strategy is concerned, he's the leader of our strategy. He has spoken of engagement throughout the world and a very important part of that engagement is

certainly the Middle East and as he said recently in his speech, including Iran and Syria. I'm encouraged by that potential for engagement, but not just there, in regions like this as well.